

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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SECDEF FOR ISA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, NATO, MARR, IC, UK

SUBJ: CONSERVATIVES ON ICELAND

REF: (A) LONDON 1805; (B) LONDON 1870

1. CONSERVATIVE PARTY HAS HAD DIFFICULTIES IN ARRIVING AT LINE ON ICELAND AND COD WAR BECAUSE PARTY GENUINELY HAS NOT WANTED TO INCREASE PROBLEMS FOR GOVERNMENT IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION. THUS, PARTY SPOKESMEN IN PARLIAMENT SUPPORTED GOVERNMENT WITHOUT MUCH IN WAY OF QUALIFICATION UNTIL CALLAGHAN STATEMENT IN PARLIAMENT FEBRUARY 4 (REFTEL B).

2. WHEN CONSERVATIVES DECIDED TO RESPOND TO CALLAGHAN STATEMENT, SPOKESMAN WAS TUGENDHAT RATHER THAN MAUDLING. WHILE ATOWING PARTY SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS GOVERNMENT HAD MADE TO NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION, TUGENDHAT STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTION OF FISHING INDUSTRY INTERESTS. HE ASKED CALLAGHAN FOR INFORMATION ON PRE-CONDITIONS FOR SENDING ROYAL NAVY BACK IN. (MAUDLING, IN HIS PREVIOUS
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COMMENTS ON ICELAND, HAD PASSED OVER PROTECTION ANGLE

ALMOST ENTIRELY.)

3. CONSERVATIVE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT ANALYST TOLD EMBOFF FEBRUARY 5 THAT TUGENDHAT'S STATEMENT REPRESENTED EFFORT BY PARTY TO CLEAR WAY FOR AGGRESSIVE CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S POLICY. CONSERVATIVES ARE LIKELY TO STEP UP CRITICISM AND DEPLORE RESUMPTION OF COD WAR ACTIVITIES AS EVIDENCE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY TO NEGOTIATE AND SETTLE SOLUTION. CONSERVATIVES WILL CONTRAST HANDLING OF THIRD COD WAR WITH SETTLEMENT OF COD WAR II ACHIEVED BY CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT.

4. COMMENT: WHILE CONSERVATIVES MAY BE PLANNING TO ATTACK GOVERNMENT ON COD WAR, WE DOUBT THERE WILL BE MUCH MILEAGE IN THIS ISSUE. AS SOON AS CONSERVATIVES CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT "FAILURE" WITH ICELAND GOVERNMENT, SPOKESMEN WILL ASK HOW CONSERVATIVES WOULD HAVE SOLVED PROBLEM. WE CANNOT SEE CONSERVATIVES MAKING A CONVINCING RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION.

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